



# ON THE DIVIDE

## DELVE DEEPER READING LIST



These suggested readings provide a range of perspectives on issues raised by the POV documentary *On the Divide* and allow for deeper engagement. Compiled by Veronda Pitchford, Assistant Director of the Califa Group - a non-profit library membership consortium in California.

## **Contributors**

**Veronda Pitchford**

# ADULT NON-FICTION

**Alcorn, Randy. *Pro-Life Answers to Pro-Choice Arguments Expanded and Updated. Expanded and Updated ed., Sisters, Oregon, Multnomah Publishers, 2000***

Presents opposing views or "answers" to many arguments used by the Pro-Choice movement as to why abortion should be legal in the United States.

**Browder, Sue Ellen. *Subverted: How I Helped the Sexual Revolution Hijack the Women's Movement. Softcover, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2019***

Contraception and abortion were not originally part of the 1960s women's movement. How did the women's movement, which fought for equal opportunity for women in education and the workplace, and the sexual revolution, which reduced women to ambitious sex objects, become so united? In *Subverted*, Sue Ellen Browder documents for the first time how it all happened, in her own life and in the life of an entire country. Trained as an investigative journalist, Browder unwittingly betrayed her true calling and became a propagandist for sexual liberation and wrote pieces meant to soft-sell unmarried sex, contraception, and abortion as the single woman's path to personal fulfillment. She did not realize until much later that her thinking and personal choices were unwittingly being influenced by those looking to subvert the women's movement.

**Cunningham, Anne. *Reproductive Rights. New York, Greenhaven Press, 2017***

There has been a neat divide in the United States and elsewhere between the pro-choice and pro-life camps. Reproductive rights are more expansive than the abortion debate. Access to affordable health services is a fundamental right, yet women, who are subject to discrimination, poverty, and violence at a higher rate than men, are at risk for losing access to screenings, maternal care, and contraception. Does the government have the right to legislate women's health? This close examination provides perspectives from all sides to help readers understand what is at stake.

**Fessler, Ann. *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v. Wade. Reprint, New York, Penguin Books, 2007***

The untold history of the million and a half women who surrendered children for adoption due to enormous family and social pressure in the decades before *Roe v. Wade*. The author is an adoptee who was herself surrendered during those years and recently contacted her mother, brings to life the voices of more than a hundred women, as well as the spirit of those times.

**Gutmann, Matthew. *Fixing Men: Sex, Birth Control, and AIDS in Mexico*. First, Oakland, CA, University of California Press, 2007**

*Fixing Men* illuminates what men in the Mexican state of Oaxaca say and do about contraception, sex, and AIDS. Based on extensive fieldwork, this breakthrough study by a preeminent anthropologist of men and masculinities reveals how these men and the women in their lives make decisions about birth control, how they cope with the plague of AIDS, and the contradictory healing techniques biomedical and indigenous medical practitioners employ for infertility, impotence, and infidelity. Gutmann talks with men during and after their vasectomies and discovers why some opt for sterilization while so many others feel "planned out of family planning."

**Johnson, Abby, and Kristin Detrow. *The Walls Are Talking: Former Abortion Clinic Workers Tell Their Stories*. San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 2018**

This book narrates the experiences of former abortion clinic workers, including those of the author, who once directed abortion services at a large Planned Parenthood clinic in Texas. These individuals, whose names have been changed to protect their identities, left their jobs in the abortion industry after experiencing a change of heart.

**Kimport, Katrina. *No Real Choice: How Culture and Politics Matter for Reproductive Autonomy (Families in Focus)*. New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2021**

In the United States, the "right to choose" an abortion is the law of the land. But what if a woman continues her pregnancy because she didn't really have a choice? What if state laws, federal policies, stigma, and a host of other obstacles push that choice out of her reach?

Based on candid, in-depth interviews with women who considered but did not obtain an abortion, *No Real Choice* punctures the myth that American women have full autonomy over their reproductive choices. Focusing on the experiences of a predominantly Black and low-income group of women, sociologist Katrina Kimport finds that structural, cultural, and experiential factors can make choosing abortion impossible—especially for those who experience racism and class discrimination.

**Miller, Patricia. *Good Catholics: The Battle over Abortion in the Catholic Church*. First, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2014**

*Good Catholics* tells the story of the nearly fifty-year struggle to assert the moral legitimacy of a pro-choice position in the Catholic Church, as well as the concurrent efforts of the Catholic hierarchy to suppress abortion dissent and to translate Catholic doctrine on sexuality into law. The author also describes the profound and surprising influence that the conflict over abortion in the Catholic Church has had not only on the church but also on the very fabric of U.S. politics.

**Nokes, Emily, et al. *Shout Your Abortion*. Toronto, Between the Lines, 2018**

The Shout Your Abortion (SYA) movement inspired people all over the country to share their experiences with abortion through creative cultural expressions such as art and begin organizing in a range of ways to start conversations that had never happened before and build communities of

healing. The book presents a collection of these photos, essays, and creative work inspired by the movement and illuminates the individuals who have breathed life into this movement to spark their liberatory and political power of defying shame and claiming sole authorship of their experiences.

**Parker, Willie. *Life's Work: A Moral Argument for Choice*. New York, 37 Ink, 2018**

Dr. Willie Parker, a southern born Christian fundamentalist, read an interpretation of the Good Samaritan in a sermon by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and realized that in order to be a true Christian, he must always show compassion for all people.

He stopped practicing obstetrics to focus entirely on providing safe abortions for women who need help the most—often women in poverty and women of color—in the hotbed of the pro-choice debate: the South. He thereafter gave up his extravagant life and became an itinerant abortion provider, becoming one of the few doctors to provide such services in Mississippi and Alabama.

**Pollitt, Katha. *Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights*. Reprint, Picador, 2015.**

Through poetry, essays, and criticism, feminist writer Katha Pollitt illustrates the political and social issues of reproductive rights including racism, and poverty. The book makes an impassioned argument for a renewed commitment to the struggle for abortion rights.

**Roberts, Dorothy. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997.**

In 1997, this groundbreaking book made a powerful entrance into the national conversation on race. In a media landscape dominated by racially biased images of welfare queens and crack babies, *Killing the Black Body* exposed America's systemic abuse of Black women's bodies. From slave masters' economic stake in bonded women's fertility to government programs that coerced thousands of poor Black women into being sterilized as late as the 1970s, these abuses pointed to the degradation of Black motherhood—and the exclusion of Black women's reproductive needs in mainstream feminist and civil rights agendas.

**Shah, Meera. *You're the Only One I've Told: The Stories Behind Abortion*. Chicago, Chicago Review Press, 2020**

This book collects the stories that were shared with Dr. Meera Shah after she started revealing that she was an abortion provider and not just a doctor. Each time she met someone new, they would confide that they'd had an abortion themselves. And the refrain was often the same: You're the only one I've told. The stories humanize abortion and combat the myths that persist in the discourse that surrounds it through the inclusion of a wide range of ages, races, socioeconomic factors and experiences, showing that abortion does not happen in a vacuum--it always occurs in a unique context.

**Singer, Elyse Ona. *Lawful Sins: Abortion Rights and Reproductive Governance in Mexico*. 1st ed., Stanford, CA. Stanford University Press, 2022**

Lawful Sins reorients reigning perspectives in medical and feminist anthropology that celebrate reproductive rights as a hallmark of women's citizenship in liberal societies. By challenging the application of a liberal rights framework to Mexican abortion, the book uncovers an apparently contradictory situation--the state's increased surveillance of women's bodies precisely in the context of their presumed liberation. The book offers a critical account of the relationship between reproductive rights, gendered citizenship, morality, and public healthcare.

**Kaplan, Laura. *The Story of Jane: The Legendary Underground Feminist Abortion Service*. First Edition, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2019.**

This is the first account of Jane's evolution as an underground abortion service, the conflicts within the group, and the impact its work had both on the women it helped and the members themselves as told by one of its members. This book stands as a compelling testament to a woman's most essential freedom--control over her own body--and to the power of women helping women.

**Walbert, David, and Douglas Butler. *Whose Choice Is It?: Abortion, Medicine, and the Law*. Seventh, Chicago, American Bar Association, 2021**

This book strives to give a comprehensive view of the entire subject of abortion--safety, morality, legality, accessibility, human rights and freedoms, reproductive justice, and a host of other issues as it relates to ongoing public policy.

# ADULT FICTION

**Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. 1st Anchor Books, New York, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1998**

The Handmaid's Tale is a futuristic dystopian novel set in a near-future New England, in a strongly patriarchal, white supremacist, totalitarian theonomic state, known as the Republic of Gilead, which has overthrown the United States government. The central character and narrator is a woman named Offred, one of the group known as "handmaids", who are forcibly assigned to produce children for the "commanders" — the ruling class of men in Gilead.

**Bennett, Brit. *The Mothers: A Novel*. Reprint, New York, Riverhead Books, 2017**

It is the last season of high school life for Nadia Turner, a rebellious, grief-stricken, seventeen-year-old beauty. Mourning her own mother's recent suicide, she takes up with the local pastor's son. Luke Sheppard is twenty-one, a former football star whose injury has reduced him to waiting tables at a diner. They are young; it's not serious. But the pregnancy that results from this teen romance—and the subsequent cover-up—will have an impact that goes far beyond their youth as Nadia hides attempts to hide her secret from everyone as she is tasked with making a decision that may impact the rest of her life.

**Hemingway, Ernest. *The Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway: Hills Like White Elephants (Short Story)*. New York, Scribner, 2017**

The story focuses on a conversation between an American man and a young woman, described as a "girl," at a Spanish train station while waiting for a train to Madrid. The girl compares the nearby hills to white elephants. The pair indirectly discuss an "operation" that the man wants the girl to have, which is implied to be an abortion.

**Oates, Joyce Carol. *Book Of American Martyrs*. New York, Ecco, 2017**

In this striking novel, Joyce Carol Oates tells the story of two very different and yet intimately linked American families whose destinies are defined by their warring convictions. Luther Dunphy is an ardent Evangelical who believes he is carrying out God's will when he assassinates Augustus Voorhees, an abortion provider in his small Ohio town. Voorhees, the idealistic doctor who is killed, leaves behind a wife and children who are scarred and embittered by grief.

**Picoult, Jodi. *A Spark of Light*. New York, Penguin Random House, 2018**

The Center for women's reproductive health offers a last chance at hope - but nobody ends up there by choice. Its very existence is controversial, and to the demonstrators who barricade the building every day, the service it offers is no different from legalized murder. Now life and death decisions are being made horrifyingly real: a lone protester with a gun has taken the staff, patients and visitors hostage. Starting at the tensest moment in the negotiations for their release, certainties unwind as truths and secrets are peeled away, revealing the complexity of balancing the right to life with the right to choose.

**Sr., DeBeers Roger. *Murder Under White*. Independently published, 2020**

A pro-life congressman has been murdered in cold blood in the parking lot of a New Hampshire abortion clinic where his 17-year-old daughter is getting an abortion. Margarita Benica Arguello O'Brien a novice detective and Andy Pick a washed-up former government operative, are quickly assigned to the investigation. Who wanted the congressman dead and why? And are there other lives at risk? Abandoned by the authorities, the pair digs deeper into the case, only to uncover a vast web of corruption and lies as they race against the clock to find the killer. But the closer they are to solving the crime, the closer they are to becoming victims, themselves.

**Zumas, Leni. *Red Clocks*. New York, Little, Brown and Company, 2019**

In this ferociously imaginative novel, abortion is once again illegal in America, in-vitro fertilization is banned, and the Personhood Amendment grants rights of life, liberty, and property to every embryo. Five women. One question. What is a woman for?

In a small Oregon fishing town, five very different women navigate these new barriers alongside age-old questions surrounding motherhood, identity, and freedom. This is a story of resilience, transformation, and hope in tumultuous — even frightening — times.



# YOUNG ADULT NON-FICTION

**Blumenthal, Karen. *Jane Against the World: Roe v. Wade and the Fight for Reproductive Rights*. New York, Roaring Brook Press, 2020**

This book traces the path to the landmark decision in Roe v. Wade and the continuing battle for women's rights. The book takes a straightforward and narrative tone, examining the root causes of the current debate around abortion and the repercussions that have affected generations of American women. This book helps facilitate difficult discussions and awareness of a topic that is rarely touched on in schools but still affects young people.

**Manes, Carly, and Emulsify. *What's an Abortion, Anyway?*, 2018.**

This book is a medically accurate, non-judgemental, and gender-inclusive resource for young folks about abortion care. Readers will learn about what an abortion is, some of the reasons people have abortions, and a few of the ways people might feel about their abortions.

**Stevenson, Robin. *My Body My Choice: The Fight for Abortion Rights*. Illustrated, Victoria, British Columbia, Orca Book Publishers, 2019**

This nonfiction book for teens examines the ongoing fight for abortion rights and reproductive justice. The long fight for abortion rights is being picked up by a new generation of courageous, creative and passionate activists. This book is about the history, and the future, of that fight.

**Thompson, Tamara. *Abortion (Current Controversies)*. 2nd ed., Farmington Hills, MI, Greenhaven Press, 2015**

This book provides students with a concise view of divergent opinions on abortion. Composed of a wide spectrum of primary sources written by many of the foremost authorities in their respective fields. Includes extensive book and periodical bibliographies and a list of organizations to contact for more information.

# YOUNG ADULT FICTION

**Colbert, Brandy. *Finding Yvonne*. New York: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2018**

Full of doubt about her future as a musician, and increasingly frustrated by her strained relationships with her parents, Yvonne meets a street musician and fellow violinist who understands her struggle. He's mysterious, charming, and different from Warren, the familiar and reliable boy who has her heart. But when Yvonne becomes unexpectedly pregnant, she has to make the most difficult decision yet about her future.

**Dessen, Sarah. *Someone Like You*. New York, Puffin Books, 1998**

Halley has always followed in the wake of her best friend, Scarlett. But when Scarlett learns that her boyfriend has been killed in a motorcycle accident, and that she's carrying his baby, she's devastated. For the first time ever, Scarlett really needs Halley. Their friendship may bend under the weight, but it'll never break—because a true friendship is a promise you keep forever.

**Hendriks, Jenni, and Ted Caplan. *Unpregnant*. New York, HarperTeen, 2020**

Seventeen-year-old Veronica Clarke never thought she'd want to fail a test—that is, until she finds herself staring at a piece of plastic with two solid pink lines. With a college-bound future now disappearing before her eyes, Veronica considers a decision she never imagined she'd have to make: an abortion.

**Hepperman, Christine. *Ask Me How I Got Here*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 2016**

Addie has always known what she was running toward, whether in cross country, in her all-girls Catholic school, or in love. Until she and her boyfriend are careless one night, and she gets pregnant. Addie makes the difficult choice to have an abortion. And after that—even though she knows it was the right decision for her—nothing is the same. She doesn't want anyone besides her parents and her boyfriend to know what happened; she doesn't want to run cross country anymore; she can't bring herself to be excited about anything. Until she reconnects with Juliana, a former teammate who's going through her own dark places.

**Mathieu, Jennifer. *The Truth About Alice: A Novel. Collectible Edition, New York, Roaring Brook Press, 2014***

Everyone knows Alice slept with two guys at one party. But did they know Alice was sexting Brandon when he crashed his car? It's true. Ask ANYBODY. Rumor has it that Alice Franklin is a slut. It's written all over the bathroom stall at Healy High for everyone to see. And after star quarterback Brandon Fitzsimmons dies in a car accident, the rumors start to spiral out of control. In this novel, four Healy High students-the girl who has the infamous party, the car accident survivor, the former best friend, and the boy next door-tell all they know. But exactly what is the truth about Alice? In the end there's only one person to ask: Alice herself.

**Mesrobian, Carrie. *The Whitsun Daughters. New York, Penguin Random House, 2020***

“How quickly everything in the world disintegrates. Everything but the loneliness of young women.” So begins a story of three girls in a small Midwestern town, narrated by the ghost of a young Irish immigrant who, over a century earlier, lived and loved on the same small patch of farmland the girls and their mothers now call home. This story weaves the girls’ day-to-day struggles with the fractured and harrowing memories of their unseen observer. The threads of the tails are familiar: An arranged marriage. An impulsive proposal bitterly refused. Secret affairs. And pregnancies, both welcome and not. Each young woman fights her own lonely battle in the generations-long war of those who would no longer settle for haunting the margins of a world that wants to ignore them.

**Waller, Sharon Biggs. *Girls on the Verge. New York, Simon and Schuster, 2019***

Camille, seventeen, gives up her spot at a prestigious theater camp to drive from Texas to New Mexico to get an abortion, accompanied by her friends Annabelle and Bea.

**Zarr, Sara and Listening Library. *Story of a Girl. New York, Little, Brown and Company, 2007***

In the three years since her father caught her in the back seat of a car with an older boy, sixteen-year-old Deanna's life at home and school has been a nightmare, but while dreaming of escaping with her brother and his family, she discovers the power of forgiveness.